

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANA 02173 081417Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EUR-12
SS-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /055 W
-----042481 081420Z /53

R 081349Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4662
SECDEF WASHDC//DSAA//
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
CUSMTM DHAHRAN
USMTM RIYADH

C O N F I D L N T I A L SANA 2173

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE
SUBJ: TRAINING FOR YEMENI F-5 PILOTS

1: CHIEF OF SAUDI MILITARY MISSION HAS APPROACHED BOTH DATT
AND MYSELF CONCERNING THEIR HOPE THAT WE CAN RESPOND QUICKLY
FOR F-5 TRAINING. SAUDIS HERE HAVE MENTIONED THE TWO PILOT
CANDIDATES WHO HAVE GRADUATED FROM KING FAISAL ACADEMY IN
RIYADH, PLUS 8 RPT 8 OTHERS WHO ARE PRESENTLY IN YAR AIR
FORCE. TRAINING INVOLVES BOTH PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL
PROBLEMS.

2. FIRST, ON PRACTICAL LEVEL, WE THINK THE TWO PILOT CANDI-
DATES WHO GRADUATED FROM KING FAISAL ACADEMY MAY HAVE ENOUGH
ENGLISH TO BEGIN FLIGHT SCHOOL IN THE STATES, BUT THE OTHER YEMENI
PILOTS ARE PROBABLY SOVIET TRAINED AND WOULD NEED A LOT OF
ENGLISH BEFORE THEY COULD BEGIN ANY KIND OF TRAINING
PROGRAM. (SAUDIS COULD START ENGLISH IN KINGDOM BUT WANT
MOVE THEM ON TO U.S. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS.) SIMILARLY, WE
DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF FLIGHT TRAINING WOULD BE REQUIRED
IN THE CASE OF EITHER OF THESE TWO GROUPS. WE THINK THE
TWO FROM FAISAL ACADEMY WOULD NEED THE FULL PILOT
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TRAINING PROGRAM. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE 8 TRAINED IN
THE SOVIET UNION HAVE PROBABLY ALREADY MADE THE TRANSITION
INTO MIG 21'S AND WOULD THEREFORE NEED LESS TRAINING TO
QUALIFY AS F-5 PILOTS. FINALLY, WE, OF COURSE, KNOW
NOTHING OF THE DEMAND ON OUR U.S. SLOTS ON F-5 TRAINING
PROGRAM AND WE WONDER IF SUCH TRAINING, IN CONGRESSIONAL
EYES, WOULD REPRESENT IMPLICIT COMMITMENT TO F-5E SALES

PRIOR TO CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW. WITH F-5B TRANSFER BEHIND US, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROCEED WITH SOME PILOT TRAINING BUT, IN ANY CASE, WE MUST LEAVE ALL THESE PRACTICAL QUESTIONS TO OTHERS.

3. POLITICAL POINT I WISH TO MAKE IS THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE AT LAST BEGUN TO MOVE ON THIS IMPORTANT AND NEW PROGRAM AND I HOPE THAT WE CAN MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT THAT IS NECESSARY TO ACCOMMODATE OUR SAUDI AND YEMENI FRIENDS. PROBLEMS OF SHORT NOTICE AND INADEQUATE INFORMATION ARE, LIKE IT OR NOT, GOING TO BE UNAVOIDABLE IN DEALING WITH EITHER THE SAUDIS OR YEMENIS. REGIONAL COOPERATION IN PENINSULA IS PROBABLY A LARGE ENOUGH USG POLITICAL INTEREST TO ACCOMMODATE BOTH PLANNING DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS HARDWARE SALES. THE SAUDIS WILL NEED OUR HELP IF THE YAR IS TO DEVELOP ANY KIND OF DETERRENT TO THE GROWING AIR POWER OF PDRY. THEY WILL NEED OUR HELP TO SHOW THE YEMENIS THAT THEY ARE A RELIABLE PARTNER IN SECURITY AFFAIRS, AS THE SOVIETS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEY ARE IN SOUTH YEMEN. THEY WILL NEED OUR HELP, IN PARTICULAR, IN THE BEGINNING OF TNIS COMPLICATED AIR FORCE PROGRAM. I HOPE WE CAN RESPOND PROMPTLY AND FAVORABLY.

RANSOM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, PILOT TRAINING, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANA02173
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780197-0627
Format: TEL
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780582/aaaacshp.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 13dab4a2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2761324
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRAINING FOR YEMENI F-5 PILOTS 1: CHIEF OF SAUDI MILITARY MISSION HAS APPROACHED BOTH DATT AND MYSELF CONCERNING THEIR HOPE THAT WE CAN RESPO
TAGS: MASS, SA, YE
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/13dab4a2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014